

Inspection of Bradford Forster Academy

Fenby Avenue, Bradford BD4 8RG

Inspection dates:	11 and 12 February 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Inadequate

The headteacher of this school is Gemma Earles. This school is part of Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Carol Dewhurst, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Tessa Mason.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils form positive relationships with staff at the school. Pupils have trusted members of staff to speak to if they have any concerns. Most pupils feel safe in school.

Recently, the school has raised its standards and expectations. However, expectations of what pupils can achieve are still not high enough. Pupils' achievement at the end of key stage 4 is considerably below the national average. This gap has narrowed over the past two years.

The school's expectations for pupils' behaviour have increased since the previous inspection. Most pupils' behaviour has improved. However, the poor behaviour of a minority of pupils sometimes disrupts learning. Their conduct in the corridors and at breaktimes can be boisterous, including the use of poor language. As a result, some pupils feel uncomfortable in the corridors.

The school works closely with local charities to provide support for its pupils and families. The school offers a free breakfast for all pupils. The school's extra-curricular offer includes a wide range of clubs to build on pupils' talents and interests. However, the delivery of some elements of the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum are varied across the school.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

In some subjects, the school has not identified clearly the knowledge that pupils should learn. Furthermore, the curriculum is not delivered consistently well. Teachers sometimes do not select the most effective learning activities. This limits the knowledge that pupils can learn. As a result, pupils do not learn as well in these subjects. In other subjects, the school has identified the knowledge that pupils should learn more clearly. This helps teachers to design learning more effectively. Pupils develop a stronger understanding of the curriculum in these subjects.

The school is beginning to prioritise reading. For instance, all pupils take part in form time reading. In some subjects, teachers use carefully chosen texts to support the curriculum. The school identifies pupils who are struggling to read. The school supports these pupils to improve their reading skills. The school does not accurately monitor the impact of this support.

The school identifies effectively any special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) that pupils may have. A small number of pupils access a bespoke curriculum. The support provided for these pupils is high quality. The school trains staff to support pupils with SEND in the classroom. Work is ongoing to ensure the consistent implementation of this support. The application of support for pupils with SEND in some lessons varies.

The school has developed a robust system to help pupils improve their attendance. As a result, pupils' rates of attendance have improved considerably since the previous inspection. The school is rightly proud of this achievement.

The school has clear systems for responding to poor behaviour. As a result, disruption to learning has decreased in classrooms. However, some staff do not apply these behaviour systems consistently. A small number of pupils do not respond to staff's requests to meet basic behaviour standards. The school recognises pupils for positive contributions to school life in regular rewards assemblies. Pupils appreciate this recognition.

Pupils access a well-planned PSHE curriculum. However, the delivery of some aspects of this curriculum, for example the teaching of different faiths and religions, is not as consistent as other aspects. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge in some aspects of the PSHE curriculum. Careers provision is well considered. Pupils have repeated opportunities to engage in a broad range of careers encounters from Years 7 to 11.

The trustees and the local governing body work closely with school leaders. They have a strong oversight of their statutory responsibilities. However, the school does not evaluate effectively the impact of some of the strategies it uses. This limits how quickly the school can make decisions about whether it needs to adapt or change these strategies. Leaders are mindful of staff workload. Staff enjoy working at the school. They are proud to serve the pupils and the community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the school has not accurately identified the important knowledge that pupils should learn. As a result, teachers are not clear enough about what they should be teaching and when this content should be taught. This limits how well pupils learn or retain the key knowledge needed to achieve well in these subjects. The school should ensure that in all subjects, important knowledge is identified and sequenced coherently.
- Teachers do not consistently ensure that pupils receive work and activities that help them to remember what has been taught. As a result, some pupils cannot recall recent or prior learning. The school should ensure that teachers provide pupils with tasks that support them to build their knowledge securely.
- Some pupils do not behave well enough. They disrupt lessons and use poor language during unstructured times. In response to this, some staff do not apply the behaviour policy consistently. As a result, some pupils feel uncomfortable in the corridors and are unable to learn during lessons. The school should ensure that all staff consistently apply the behaviour policy, including when addressing poor language.
- The school does not use all the information available to evaluate the impact of new strategies or curriculum developments. As a result, the impact of these changes on

pupils is not always fully understood by the school to identify appropriate next steps within the curriculum developments. The school should ensure that leaders at all levels are supported to have a clear understanding of how to track the impact of new strategies or curriculum developments effectively.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	140429
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	10379389
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	973
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tessa Mason
CEO of the trust	Carol Dewhurst
Principal	Gemma Earles
Website	www.bradfordforsteracademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	17 and 18 December 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust.
- The school appointed a new principal in September 2023.
- The school uses three unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school provides a breakfast club for its pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form

provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector spoke with the CEO of the trust, members of the trust board, including the chair of the trust, and members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other leaders and staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, geography and drama. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. Inspectors also considered the quality of education in some other curriculum subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in a range of situations, including in corridors, at social times, at transitions and in lessons. They also spoke with pupils about behaviour and bullying.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders, teachers and pupils about the school's programme of personal development.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, parents and carers and staff through discussions and looking at information collected from Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Chris Sergeant, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Rebekah Ramsden	Ofsted Inspector
Liz Cresswell	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Lewis	Ofsted Inspector

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